

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated June 19, 2007, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-20, which were all of the then pending claims, over the prior art, primarily a document printed from a Web site and titled “Way Back Machine” (Collins). Specifically, Claims 1-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 as being fully anticipated by Collins, and Claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Collins in view of Official Notice. Also, Claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Collins in view of a document from Imaging Portals (Portals). Claim 20 was further rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as bailing to comply with the written description requirement.

In response to the Office Action, Applicants filed an Amendment on September 20, 2007. In a Notice dated December 21, 2007, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office indicated that this Amendment was non-compliant. The Office indicated that the claims were not amended in accordance with rule and law; and the Office, specifically citing Claim 19, stated that the claims are different and not underlined and or crossed out accordingly.

Applicants’ Attorney has carefully reviewed the Amendment filed September 20, 2007, and it appears that all of the changes to the claims were made in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.121. The material being added to the claims was underlined, and the material being deleted is enclosed within double brackets. Claim 19 was not changed in the Amendment. The present Amendment is being filed with the same changes that applicants had proposed in the Amendment dated September 20, 2007. Specifically, Claims 1, 7, 13 and 20 are being amended, and new Claim 21 is being added.

Independent Claims 1, 7 and 13 are being amended to better define the subject matters of these claims. Claim 20 is being amended to improve the form of the claim, and new Claim 21, which depends from Claim 20, is being added to describe preferred or optional features of the present invention.

The rejection of Claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. 112 is respectfully traversed. In rejecting Claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. 112, the Examiner argued that the claim contains subject matter not described in the specification. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

The equipment service data elements set forth in the first subparagraph of Claim 20 are described in paragraph 21 of the specification; the fact that the user may be a service franchisee, as set forth in the second subparagraph of Claim 20, is described in, among other places, paragraph 28 of the specification; and the service data elements set forth in the third subparagraph of Claim 20 are described in paragraph 29 of the specification. Also, paragraph 31 of the specification provides the antecedent basis for the providing step set forth in the fourth subparagraph of Claim 20 and for the providing step and the feeding step set forth in the fifth and sixth subparagraphs of the claim.

Thus, the subject matter contained in Claim 20 is set forth in the specification, and the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and to withdraw the rejection of Claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. 112.

In addition, for the reasons discussed below, all of Claims 1, 3-7, 9-13 and 15-21 patentably distinguish over the prior art and are allowable. The Examiner is, accordingly, also asked to reconsider and to withdraw the above-identified rejections of Claims 1, 3-7, 9-13 and 15-20 under 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103, and to allow these claims and new Claim 21.

Generally, Claims 1-20 patentably distinguish over the prior art because the prior art does not disclose or suggest the total, comprehensive, Web based service management solution described in independent Claims 1, 7 and 13.

As explained in detail in the present application, this invention may be effectively used to provide a complete solution that addresses all of the needs of the service after sales. To achieve this comprehensive solution, a stream of information flows to and from a database, between a service provider and an equipment manufacturer, integrating back office and front office operations, and allowing total management over customer service.

The instant invention, by utilizing this back-and-forth, interactive approach, achieves a number of important advantages. For instance, the invention helps the manufacturer increase service revenue, to capture better customer and equipment history, to improve turn around time, to increase profitability, management of spare parts, warranty administration and customer satisfaction. In addition, the invention allows the service provider to obtain information such as service history, and account and billing information.

The procedure disclosed in Collins does not achieve the same comprehensiveness that is achieved with the present invention. In particular, the Collins document is a Web page from a Web site. This Web site provides some information about servicing products, but it does not provide the same interactive access, via the Internet, with both the manufacturer and the manufacturer's database that the present invention does provide.

The new reference cited by the Examiner from Imaging Portals, like Collins, discloses aspects of service, but does not provide the total solution of the present invention. More specifically, the document from Imaging Portals discloses a network appliance that monitors and

manages, among other matters, operating conditions of imaging and multifunction peripherals. It is also disclosed that manufacturers may incorporate this network appliance into their product.

The present invention is quite different. With the instant invention, the service provider does not use the product to contact the manufacturer, but instead contacts the manufacturer with a collaborative, interactive access to the manufacturer and to the manufacturer's database over the Internet to manage service of the product.

Independent Claims 1, 7 and 13 are being amended to emphasize the above-discussed feature of the instant invention. Specifically, the preamble of each of these claims is being amended to indicate expressly that the invention provides total management of customer service to enable collaboration between a manufacturer and a user.

This total management is of significant utility because, for example, it gives a service provider a comprehensive and complete, Web based solution that addresses all of the needs of the service after sales. Moreover, the present invention may be used, as explained in detail in the present application, to give a service provider with enterprise wide visibility to a continuous stream of data and information.

The other references of record have been reviewed, and these other references, whether they are considered individually or in combination, are not believed to be any more relevant than Collins. In particular, these other references, again whether considered individually or in combination, also do not disclose or suggest the above-discussed total, comprehensive, Web based service management solution of the present invention.

Because of the above-discussed differences between Claims 1, 7 and 13 and the prior art, and because of the advantages associated with those differences, it cannot be said that any of Claims 1, 7 and 13 is anticipated by or is obvious in view of the prior art. Consequently, these Claims 1, 7 and 13 patentably distinguish over the prior art and are allowable. Claims 3-6 and 19-21 are dependent from, and are allowable with, Claim 1. Likewise, Claims 9-12 are dependent from Claim 7 and are allowable therewith; and Claims 15-18 are dependent from, and are allowable with, Claim 13. The Examiner is thus respectfully asked to reconsider and to withdraw the rejections of Claims 1, 3-7, 9-13 and 15-18 under 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103 and the rejection of Claims 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. 103, and to allow Claims 1, 3-7, 9-13 and 15-21.

In view of the above-discussion, the Examiner is requested to reconsider and to withdraw the rejections of Claims 1, 3-7, 9-13 and 15-18 under 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103 and the rejection of Claims 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. 103. The Examiner is further asked to reconsider and to withdraw the rejection of Claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. 112, and to allow Claims 1, 3-7, 9-13 and 15-21. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicant's Attorneys would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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